

Rurouni Kenshin



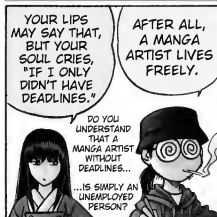
SHONEN JUMP GRAPHIC NOVEL

Story & Art by

Nobuhiro Watsuki

volume

19



和月伸宏

NOBUHIRO WATSUKI



A LIFE OF FREEDOM

I HADN'T SEEN THIS STRAY DOG FROM MY OLD WORKPLACE IN A LONG TIME.

HE WAS TAKEN CARE OF BY SOMEONE, SO HE WAS CLEAN AND FLUFFY. I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAD HAPPENED IN THE TWO YEARS THAT PASSED, BUT HE SEEMED WEAKER AND WOBLIER.

I DO NOT KNOW WHICH IS BETTER, STRAY OR PET, BUT ONE THING IS FOR SURE: IT PAINED ME TO REALIZE THAT LIVING FREELY IS SUCH A HIGH RISK/HIGH RETURN LIFESTYLE.

Rurouni Kenshin, which has found fans not only in Japan but around the world, first made its appearance in 1992, as an original short story in *Weekly Shonen Jump Special*. Later rewritten and published as a regular, continuing *Jump* series in 1994, *Rurouni Kenshin* ended serialization in 1999 but continued in popularity, as evidenced by the 2000 publication of *Yahiko no Sakabatô* ("Yahiko's Reversed-Edge Sword") in *Weekly Shonen Jump*. His most current work, *Busô Renkin* ("Armored Alchemist"), began publication in June 2003, also in *Jump*.

RUROUNI KENSHIN
VOL. 19: SHADES OF REALITY
The SHONEN JUMP Graphic Novel Edition

STORY AND ART BY
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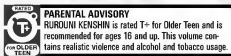
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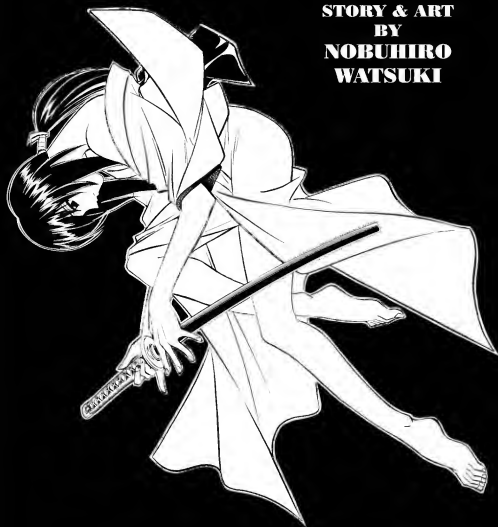
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SHONEN JUMP GRAPHIC NOVEL

Rurouni Kenshin™

STORY & ART
BY
NOBUHIRO
WATSUKI



MEIJI SWORDSMAN ROMANTIC STORY
Vol. 19: SHADES OF REALITY

Once he was *hitokiri*, an assassin, called Battōsai. His name was legend among the pro-Imperialist or “patriot” warriors who launched the Meiji Era. Now, Himura Kenshin is *furorui*, a wanderer, and carries a reversed-edge *sakabatō* to prohibit himself from killing.



Inui Banjin



Otowa Hyoko

THUS FAR

Having finally thwarted Shishio Makoto's plan to conquer Japan, Kenshin and his friends return to Tokyo. While Sanosuke seeks treatment for his injured hand, the others return to everyday life at Kamiya Dojo. But their peace is short-lived, as Yukishiro Enishi returns from Shanghai to gather warriors who hold grudges against Battōsai. While stopping by Akabeko for a party, Kenshin passes a man whose arm he cut off long ago—that night, Akabeko is destroyed by a cannon fired from Mount Ueno, where a piece of paper marked “*Jinchū*” is found. The police blame the attack on opponents of the new government, but Kenshin puts two and two together, and knows that his old enemies have reemerged. Sanosuke and Kenshin conceal the fact that they're preparing for the enemy from Kaoru and the others, but the attack comes from unexpected quarters: Inui Banjin strikes the Maekawa dojo where Kaoru trains, while Otowa Hyoko appears at the home of the chief of police! Kenshin heads for the chief's house as Sanosuke comes upon a terrible scene at the Maekawa dojo...

神谷
薫



Kamiya Kaoru

相楽
左之助



Sagara Sanosuke

明神
弥彦



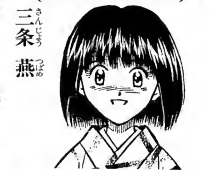
Myōjin Yahiko

緋村
剣心
(入斬り抜刀斎)



Himura Kenshin
(Hitokiri Battōsai)

三条
薫



Sanjō Tsubame

雪代
縁



Yukishiro Enishi



C
A
S
T



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Act 159
**The
Invulnerable
Gauntlets**

ろくろ首 辰
戌亥 番神
RURONJI
KENSIN

INUI
BANJIN



仲宏
和月

HA-
HAAA!!

YOU'LL
DEAL
WITH ME?!

0000



HMPH.
KENSIN
PRAISED YOU
FOR YOUR
RESEARCH.

HE GAVE
YOU TOO
MUCH
CREDIT.

YOU SURE
DON'T LOOK
LIKE THE
POLICE!

WHAT ARE
YOU, A
CONCERNED
NEIGHBOR?!



WRITE IT
DOWN ON
YOUR PALM
SO YOU DON'T
FORGET!!

A MAN WITH
TIGHTER TIES
TO KENSHIN
THAN ANYONE
HERE!!

MY
NAME IS
SAGARA
SANOSUKE!



...EVEN
MORE
NICELY
THAN THE
OTHERS!

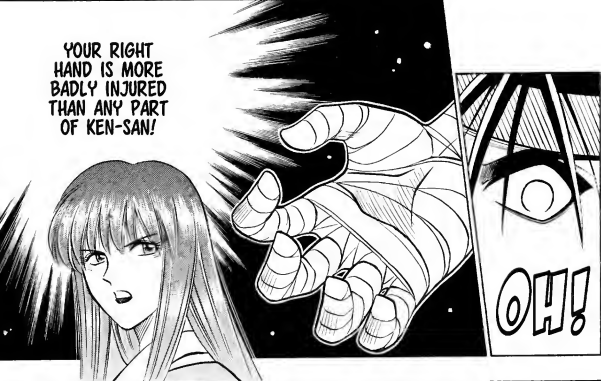
WELL,
THEN I'LL
HAVE TO
TREAT YOU...







YOUR RIGHT
HAND IS MORE
BADLY INJURED
THAN ANY PART
OF KEN-SAN!



BUT
WE'RE
BOTH
FIGHTERS
WITHOUT
WEAPONS—

NO!
I CAN'T
USE THE
MASTERY
OF TWO
LAYERS!



IT'S STILL
HAND-TO-
HAND
COMBAT!!



SH HAH

HA—

WG

WHAT!

HYU

HAAA
!!!!

KKK

KKKK



HA!



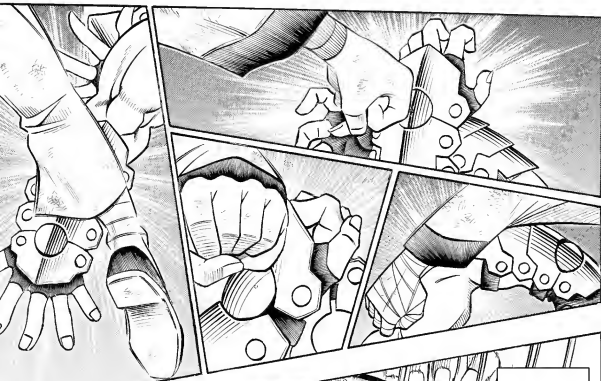
THIS
GUY...!

RRR—



...!!

WOBBLE



WHERE
DID
HE—



HA-
HAAA!!

GET
THOSE
MOVES
?!!

◀ READ
THIS
WAY ▶

...I
SEE...

TO HIT
YOU, FIRST
I'LL HAVE TO
BREAK THOSE
GAUNTLETS
OF YOURS.

HEY!
ARE YOU
FINISHED
ALREADY
?!

BAM!

BUT CAN
YOU
DO IT?!

**VERY
GOOD!!**

EVEN
AT ONLY
ONE SUN
SEVEN BU*
THICK,
IT CAN
DEFLECT A
BULLET!

EVERY
SURFACE HAS
BEEN ANGLED SO
THAT ANY BLOW
CAN BE TURNED
ASIDE!

*5.15 CM

JUTSU-
SHIKI
MUTEKI-
RYŪ!!!

AND THE
SCHOOL THAT
STRIDES WITH
THESE GAUNTLETS
CONQUERS ALL
STYLES OF
MARTIAL-ARTS,
PAST AND
PRESENT.

MY MASTER
CHALLENGED
BATTŌSAI WITH
JUTSU-SHIKI
MUTEKI-RYŪ...
AND FAILED!

THE
INVULNERABLE
GAUNTLETS!!

INUI BANJIN
HAS NEVER
SEEN DEFEAT
WHILE
WEARING—



BUT I
WILL KILL
HIM!!!

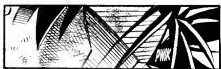


I CAN'T
HAVE PEOPLE
THINKING I'M
A LOSER
JUST
BECAUSE
HE WAS.

MM.

SO...YOU
TARGETED
KENSIN
BECAUSE
OF YOUR
MASTER...?

WOBBLE



I'VE GOT NO
SYMPATHY
FOR THE
FIGHTER WHO
LOSES—EVEN
IF HE IS
MY MASTER!



NOTHING
MATTERS
IN LIFE BUT
VICTORY!

IS
THAT
RIGHT?



I'M
ALWAYS
FACING
FORWARD!

...IF HE WAS
DRIVEN BY REAL
GRIEF, I'D THINK
IT WAS RIGHT TO
LET HIM SETTLE
THE MATTER
WITH
KENSIN.

ACTUALLY, I'M
RELIEVED TO
HEAR THAT.
BECAUSE, NO
MATTER HOW
CRAZY AN
AVENGER
WAS...



DOESN'T
DESERVE
TO DIE BY
ANY CODE!!

BUT A
FIGHT-FIEND
MILKING HIS
MASTER'S
DEFEAT AS
AN EXCUSE—

GNN

WHAT
IT FEELS
LIKE TO
LOSE!!

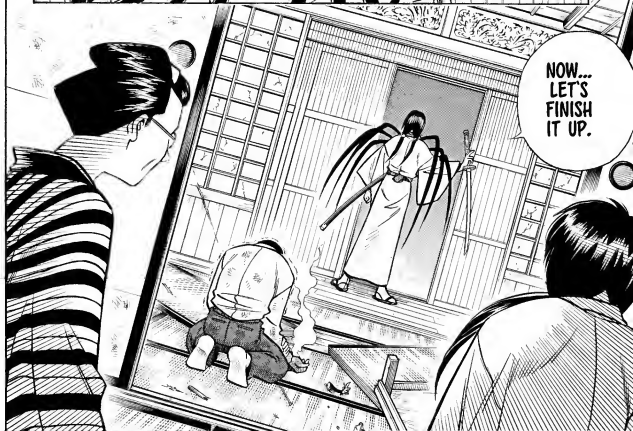
I'LL
TEACH
YOU
MYSELF—

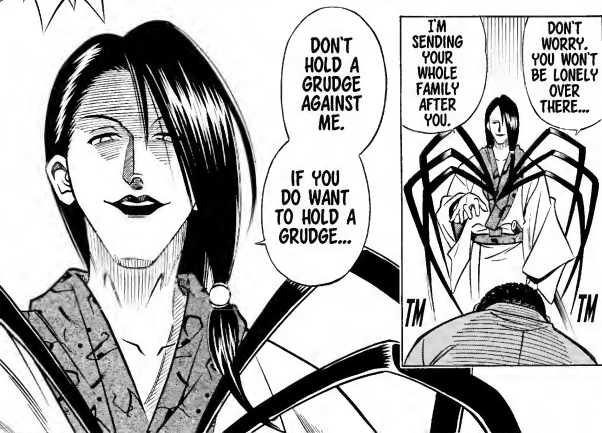
HA-HAAA
!!

...OF
TWO
LAYERS
!!!!

HA
MASTERY
...









DEEPEST
APOLOGIES,
BUT BEING
THE TARGET
OF
GRUDGES...

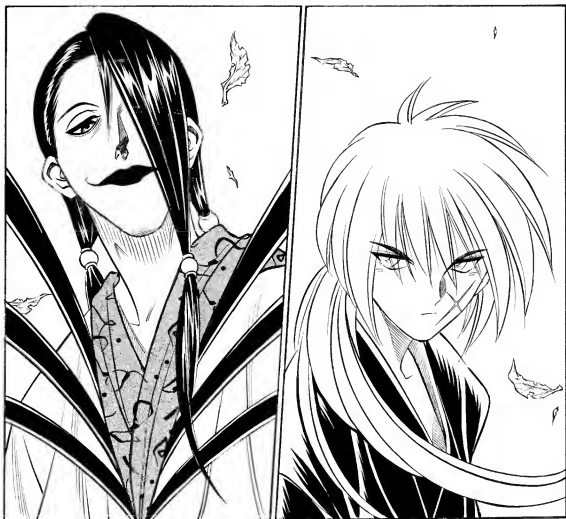
...IS A
PRACTICE
THIS ONE
WOULD
PREFER
TO END.

...**"HOLD IT
AGAINST
THIS ONE"?**



Rurouni Kenshin





Act 160
**Instrument
of Shadows**



**DRAW,
BATTOSAI!**

HM...?

**WHAT'S
THE
MATTER?**

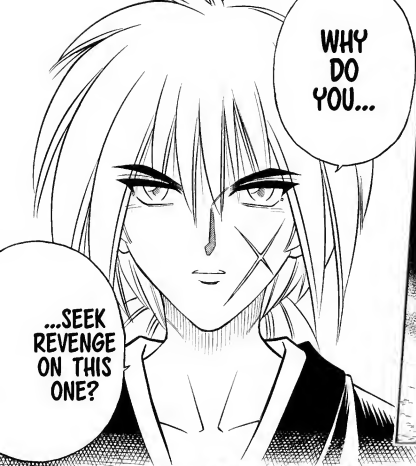


**NO,
HIMURA-
SAN!**

**HE MADE MY
GUN MISFIRE
WITHOUT EVEN
TOUCHING IT!!**



**THERE'S
SOMETHING
ABOUT
HIS LEFT
HAND—**





YES!

...NOT A
LIFE TO BE
PROUD OF,
IS IT?

BUT TO
AVENGE
THIS MAN...

I
SEEK
YOUR
DEATH!



OR
I'LL ENJOY
DISPATCHING
THESE FOUR
WITH MY
BAIKA
CHŪZEN!!

NOW
QUIT
STALLING!

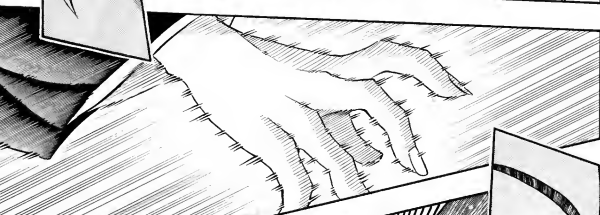




HIMURA-
SAN!



USH







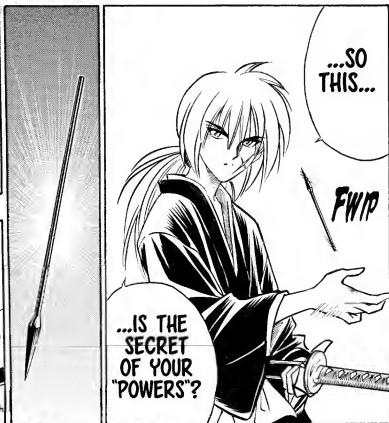
AN
ARROW
...?!

BUT
THERE'S
NO
BOW...!



...HEH.

VERY
GOOD.



...SO
THIS...

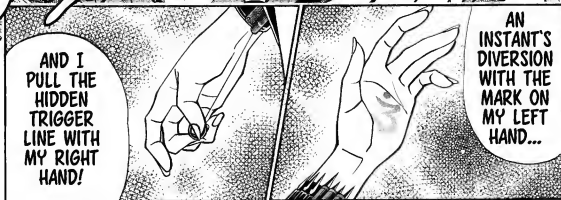
FWIP

...IS THE
SECRET
OF YOUR
"POWERS"?



THE
SHADOW
INSTRU-
MENT-
BAIKA
CHÜZEN!!

ALL I
HAVE ARE
SIX METAL
BARRELS
WITH A
STRONG
SPRING!!

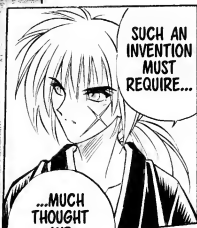


AND I
PULL THE
HIDDEN
TRIGGER
LINE WITH
MY RIGHT
HAND!

AN
INSTANT'S
DIVERSION
WITH THE
MARK ON
MY LEFT
HAND...

AND THE 13
INSTRUMENTS
HIDDEN ABOUT
MY BODY
CAN FELL
ANY FOE!!

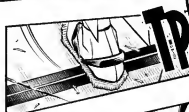
I AM
THE
"HIDDEN
WEAPON."
OTOWA
HYŌKO!



...MUCH
THOUGHT
AND
PRACTICE.

DOES
IT
NOT?

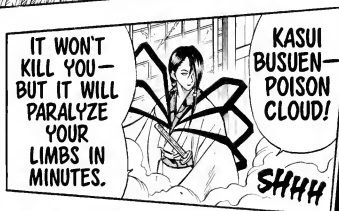




...IF
REVENGE
IS YOUR
MOTIVE,
THIS ONE
WILL
DUEL.

BUT YOU
MUST STOP
INVOLVING
INNOCENT
PEOPLE.





IT WON'T
KILL YOU—
BUT IT WILL
PARALYZE
YOUR
LIMBS IN
MINUTES.

KASUI
BUSUEN—
POISON
CLOUD!

SHHH

IT
BURNS!! MIST...?



I'D HAVE
ENJOYED
SHOWING YOU
TWO OR
THREE MORE
OF MY
TRICKS...
...BUT
IT'S
TIME FOR
JINCHŪ.



IF THAT
PROVES
POSSIBLE.

I HOPE
FOR
ANOTHER
ENCOUNTER.

SHH

HHH

...JINCHŪ?

TIME
FOR...

AAA!



"INVULNER-
ABLE"?
SORRY,
BUT...

MY
GAUNTLET!!
BUT IT'S—

GG

THERE'S
NOTHING
THIS RIGHT
HAND CAN'T
CRUSH!





NOTH...



GYAAAAA





FROM
USING THE
TWO LAYERS
WITHOUT
BEING
FULLY
HEALED...

REACTION
...

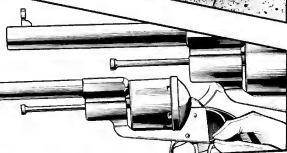
GUHHH



WE'VE
GOT
HIM!!

CHK

CHK

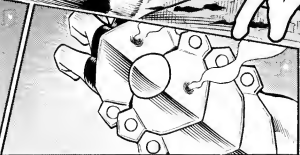
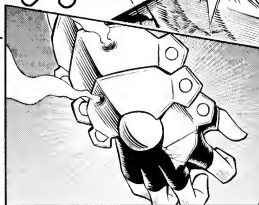


BAN

FIRE!!

BAN
BAN

BAN









Rurouni Kenshin



Act 161

Hard Questioning





NOW.

JINCHŪ
IS NOW.

FORGET
ABOUT
JINCHŪ...DID I
JUST SEE...



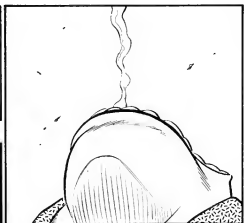
A MAN
COME OUT
OF A MAN?!







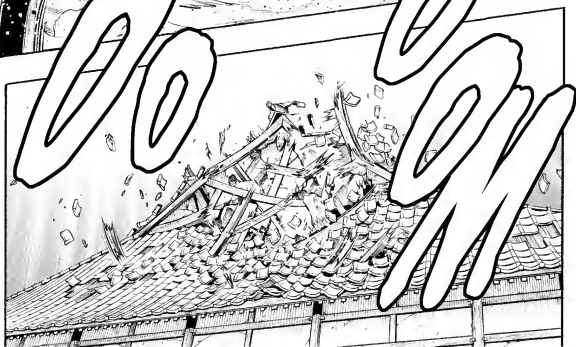




"TIME FOR JINCHŪ."

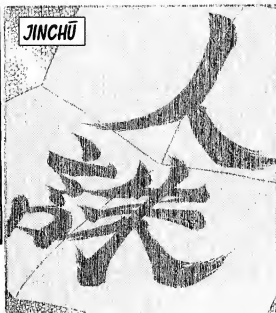












TIME FOR

1/4



人

じん

誅

ちゅう

JINCHU

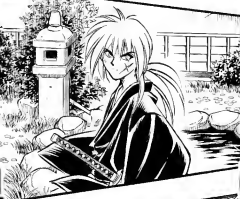
時

じ

の

間

かん







RUN!!



URAMURA







Rurouni Kenshin

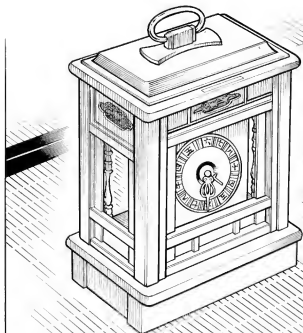


Act 162

Dawn

Thoughts





TK

TK



GOOD
MORNING...

...KAORU-
SAN.



IS
HIMURA-
SAN...

...NOT
BACK
YET?



OH...
TSUBAME-
CHAN...

GOOD
MORNING.
DID YOU
SLEEP
W—



SO YOU
WERE AWAKE
FOR THAT,
HUH?

THEN
YOU'VE GOT
A ROUGH
STRETCH
AHEAD.

IT'S
ALWAYS LIKE
THIS WITH A
DIFFERENT
PILLOW.



SO
MANY...ODD
THINGS ARE
HAPPENING.

YES. I
HID BEHIND
THE CORNER
OF THE DOJO
BECAUSE I
WAS AFRAID.

BUT...
KAORU-
SAN?

MM?

IT'S NOTHING
YOU NEED
TO WORRY
ABOUT.

WHAT'S
GOING
ON?

...OR SO
I'D LIKE
TO SAY.



KAORU-SAN? THAT HURTS...

THE COMB'S POKING.

THOUGH SANOSUKE SEEMS TO KNOW.

ting
ting



BUT HONESTLY, I DON'T KNOW EITHER...

...WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON.



I'LL ASK KENSHIN WHEN HE GETS BACK.



HMMM.

YOU'RE TOO SHARP.

I DON'T THINK HE'LL TELL YOU.

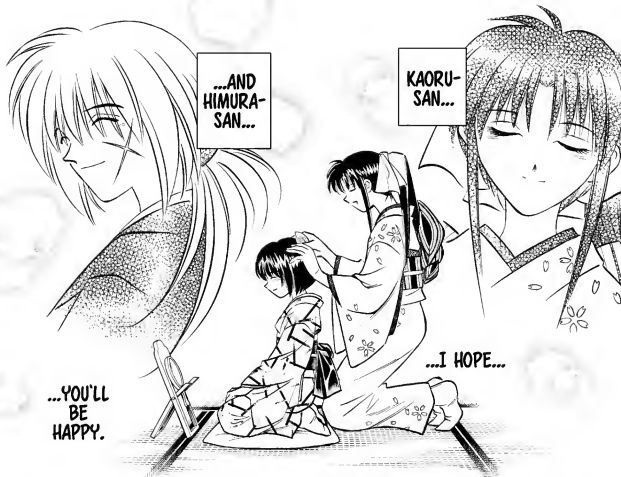


KENSHIN'S HABIT OF CARRYING EVERYTHING ON HIS OWN SHOULDERS GETS ANNOYING.

AND TOO RIGHT.

SIGH







WHAT?!

HAS HE
BEEN OUT
SINCE LAST
NIGHT?!





IT ISN'T
GOOD FOR
YOU TO
GET ANY
STRONGER
RIGHT NOW!

I TOLD
YOU! YOU'RE
ALREADY
REALLY STRONG
FOR A TEN-
YEAR-OLD!



!



KAORU—

YOU
STILL
WON'T TEACH
ME THE
SECRET?!



THE
TIME IS
NOW!



WHEN
THE TIME
COMES—



YOU
ALL NEED
ME NOW!



YOU
KNOW THERE'S
SOMETHING
GOING ON
AROUND US!



I
CAN'T...!



I
CAN'T
STAND
IT...

SO WHAT IF
I'M STRONG
FOR A TEN-
YEAR-OLD?! IF
I'M NOT A REAL
STRENGTH, THEN
I'M THE SAME
AS A WEAK-
NESS!

YAHIKO-
KUN...?

THIS
BOY
...

YAHIKO...

HYO

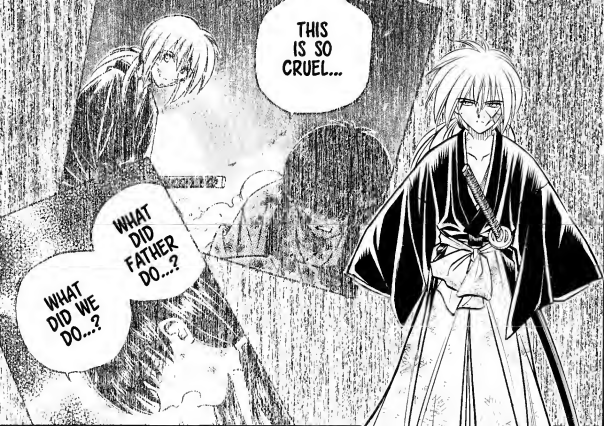
I CAN'T
STAND
BEING...

...THE
ONLY
WEAK
ONE!!

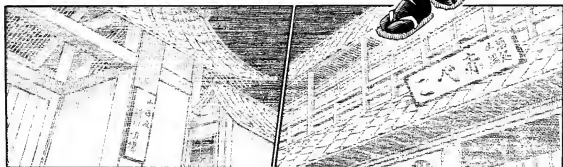


HE'S
CRYING
...





**NOTHING...BUT
HAVE A LOOSE
CONNECTION
TO HITOKIRI
BATTOSAI.**



**...AND MAEKAWA
DOJO...**

AKABEKO...

**...THEY
MUST BE
PREVENTED.**



**RANDOM
ATTACKS.
BLIND
DESTRUCTION.
NEXT TIME...**

THIS BATTLE
ISN'T LIKE
OTHERS, WHERE
THIS ONE CAN
DEFEAT THE
OPPONENT AND
END IT.



...THEN
WHAT?



BUT
AFTER
THAT...

FROM WHAT
OTOWA SAID,
THERE ARE
SIX OF THEM.

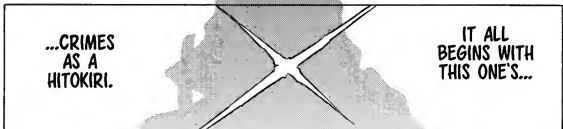


...WANT REVENGE
ON THIS ONE THROUGH
THEIR "JINCHŪ."



THOUGH
THEIR
REASONS
MAY BE
DIFFERENT,
ALL SIX...

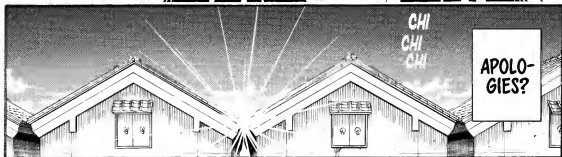
...CRIMES
AS A
HITOKIRI.



IT ALL
BEGINS WITH
THIS ONE'S...

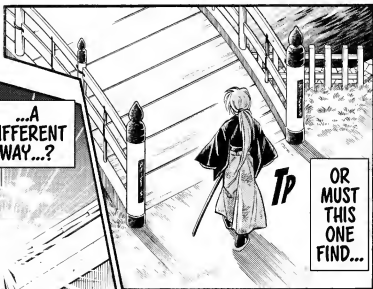
...TO
CLEAR
THIS
SLATE?

IS
THERE
ANY
WAY...



CHI
CHI
CHI

APOLO-
GIES?

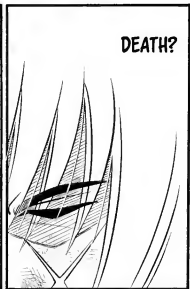


...A
DIFFERENT
WAY...?

TP

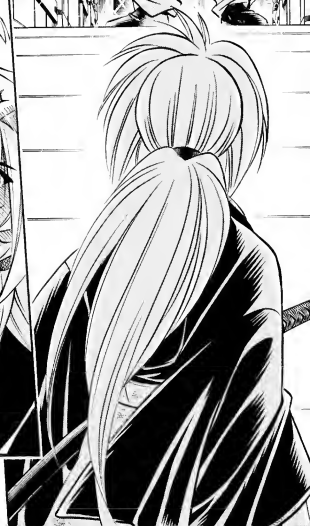
OR
MUST
THIS
ONE
FIND...

DEATH?





WHO'S
THIS...?



YOU
ARE...

...ENISHI.







Rurouni Kenshin





DID
YOU SEE
THE
ILLUSION?

THE
IMAGE
OF MY
SISTER?



BUT...

...BATTŌSAI
...



...FOR
SHE'S
ALWAYS
WITH
ME...

I
THINK
SO...



...FOREVER.

...TODAY
...

...AND...

Act 163—Drawing to a Close

YOU
HAVE NO
RIGHT...

...TO
LAY EYES
ON MY
SISTER!!

Act 163

Drawing to a Close

ARE
YOU THE
MASTERMIND
...

...OF
THIS
MADNESS
?

...ENISHI...

YUKI-
SHIRO...

DO YOU
EVEN NEED
TO ASK?

ALREADY
ELEVEN
YEARS AGO.

I LAST
SAW YOU
IN THE WAR
FLAMES
OF TOBA
FUSHIMI.



I HAVE
BECOME THE
HEAD OF THE
SHANGHAI MAFIA,
CONTROLLING
THE WEAPONS
MARKET OF A
CONTINENT!

PLEASE
STOP.

...THAT'S
ENOUGH.

...IS THAT
YOU LISTEN.

NO. ALL
I WANT
FROM
YOU...

LIVED TO
AVENGE
MY
SISTER...
TO MAKE
YOU PAY.

SO MANY
TIMES I
NEARLY
DIED...BUT
EVERY
TIME
I LIVED...

ELEVEN
YEARS IN
SHANGHAI...
NEARLY FOR-
GETTING HOW
TO SPEAK
JAPANESE...

BEGINNING
IN THE GUTTER...
BUT CRAWLING
UP...

...AND
FINALLY
REACHING
THE PEAK.



OTOWA'S
SHADOW
INSTRUMENTS!

KUJI-
RANAMI'S
ARMSTRONG
CANNON!

ALL
ACQUIRED
BY ME—
THROUGH
THE BLACK
MARKET!!

BANJIN'S
GAUNTLETS!

AND
GEIN'S
BOMB!

...THE
IRONCLAD
BATTLESHIP...

...OF
SHISHIO
MAKOTO.



...FOR
GOOD
MEASURE...

AND...



HEH





I HAD
NO IDEA
YOU WOULD
CLASH WITH
SHISHIO
HEAD-ON.

BUT
THAT
WAS A
MISTAKE.

...



I'M
VERY
GLAD,
THOUGH...

...THAT
YOU
SURVIVED.

HEH







AND
THE JAPAN
YOU CREATED
WITH YOUR
BLOODIED
SWORD!

THOSE
WHO ARE
CLOSE TO YOU.
THOSE WHO HAVE
EXCHANGED
WORDS WITH
YOU.



ANYTHING ELSE IS NO
LONGER REVENGE...IT'S
MURDER!! TOMOE MAY
WISH FOR REVENGE,
BUT SURELY NOT
MURDER!!



YOU'RE
WRONG!
ENISHI, IF
THIS ONE
COMMITTED A
CRIME, THIS
ONE SHOULD
BE PUNISHED!!



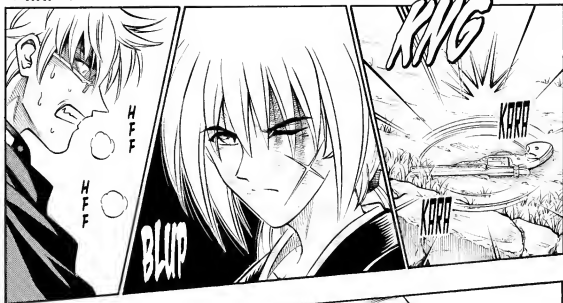
JAPAN
WITHOUT
MY
SISTER...

...IS A
CRIME
UNTO
ITSELF!



DON'T
SPEAK
ABOUT MY
SISTER!

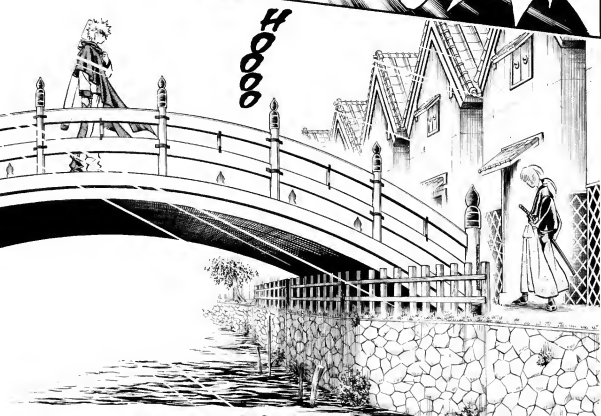
WHAT
DO YOU
KNOW
ABOUT
HER?!



OR I'LL BRING TEN
BATTLESHIPS INTO
TOKYO BAY AND
TURN THIS CITY INTO
A SEA OF FLAMES
IN ONE NIGHT!!



NEVER LET
MY SISTER'S
NAME SPILL
FROM YOUR
MOUTH!!





THE
LOCATION
WILL
BE KAMIYA
DOJO.

THEN
AND THERE
WILL
JINCHŪ BE
COMPLETE.



THEN
YOU WILL
SEE THAT I AM
RATHER MORE
THAN JUST
A WEAPONS
DEALER.

LOOK
FORWARD
TO IT.

TP



ENISHI!!



HEH-
HEH...

HEH...

HEH-
HEH-
HEH...

TP

TP

TP

TP



WHAT
ELSE
CAN I
DO?!

IS THERE
NO WAY THAT
I CAN MAKE
AMENDS FOR
TAKING YOUR
SISTER FROM
YOU?!

OTHER
THAN THAT...
OTHER THAN
COMBAT...

ANSWER
ME,
ENISHI!!



YOU ARE
TRULY AN
INCORRIGIBLE
FOOL.

...YOU
CAN'T LET
GO OF SUCH
ABSURD
IDEAS...

...EVEN
NOW...



"WHAT
CAN YOU
DO?"

LET'S
SEE...IF I
HAD TO
ANSWER...





JUST
WAIT...



ONLY
TEN MORE
DAYS.

...SISTER...







BUT NONE
OF THEM
DREAM THAT
THE
"ANSWER"...

...AWAITS, IN
ITS MOST
DEVASTATING
FORM, AT THE
END OF THE
BATTLE.

Rurouni Kenshin



Act 164—Shades of Reality



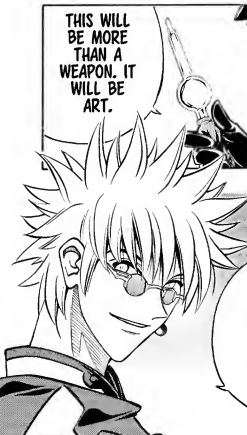
MM. I
DECLARED
IT THIS
MORNING.

TEN DAYS
LATER?



IT'S
FINE. I'LL
TALK THEM
INTO IT.

ARE YOU
SURE? THE
REST WON'T
BE QUIET
ABOUT IT.



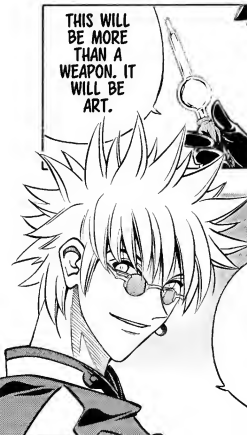
THIS WILL
BE MORE
THAN A
WEAPON. IT
WILL BE
ART.



DON'T
WORRY. I'M
USING ALL
MY SKILL.



MORE
IMPORTANT,
WILL TEN
DAYS BE
ENOUGH—



GLINT

THIS WILL
BE THE
KEY PIECE...
TO OUR
JINCHŪ.

I'M
COUNTING
ON YOU.

TO
FINISH
THAT?



KENSHIN'S NOT BACK YET?







NO FAIR!
YOU KNOW
I CAN'T USE
MY RIGHT
HAND!

BONG

YOU
KNOW
SOME-
THING
!!
SPIT
IT
OUT,
BIRD
HEAD!!





Act 164
**Shades of
Reality**

伸
月
宏





...YES.



YOU
SEEM
TIRED.
WOULD
YOU
LIKE TO
SLEEP...

WEL-
COME
HOME!



KENSHIN
...



...ASK
HIM
WHAT'S
HAPPEN-
ING...?

KAORU-
SAN,
DIDN'T
YOU
WANT
TO...



...HE'S
COMPLETELY
DAZED...

...I
CAN'T
ASK HIM.

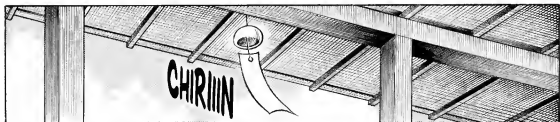
THAT'S
NOT
NORMAL.
WHAT
HAPPENED?

THIS IS
THE FIRST
TIME I'VE
SEEN
KENSIN...

...SUFFERING
SO MUCH.



CHIRIIN



KIUCH



HOW?

HOW CAN...

...THIS
ONE MAKE
AMENDS?



TOMOE
...

ENISHI
...





HOW...?

WHAT
IS THIS
PLACE...?

NO...

A
LANDSCAPE
FIT FOR
SHISHIO...

...HILLS
OF
BONES...

...LIKE
IN
HELL...



KAORU-
DONO?!



A
LANDSCAPE
SUITED
FOR THIS
ONE, AS
WELL.

THOUGH THIS
ONE WIELDED
A SWORD FOR
THE NEW AGE
AND FOR THE
DEFENSE OF
THE WEAK...

TO THOSE
WHO LOST
LOVED
ONES,
HITOKIRI
BATTŌSAI
IS JUST AN
ASSASSIN.

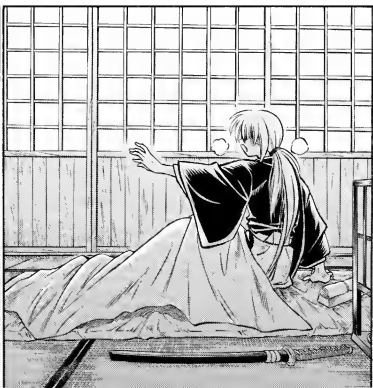
SO MUCH
PAIN AND
SORROW...



KAORU?



KAORU-DONO,
WHY ARE
YOU HERE?!





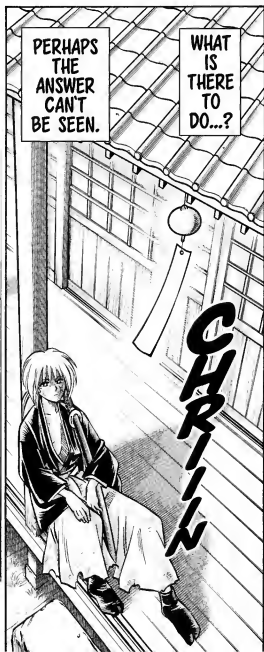
...CAN'T
BE...

THIS...



THE
DOJO...

WILL
THESE
VISIONS...
DESTROY
EVERY-
THING...?



PERHAPS
THE
ANSWER
CAN'T
BE SEEN.

WHAT
IS
THERE
TO
DO...?







YAHIKO MAY
SPEED AHEAD
AND MAKE
MISTAKES...

...BUT HE
WON'T MAKE
SUCH MISTAKES
AS THIS ONE
HAS MADE.

...THAT'S
TRUE.



...SHOULD...

...EVERYONE
BE TOLD...

EVEN
YAHIKO HAS
SENSED
THE
TRUTH.



...



GYU



B-
BMP



HOW
ARE YOUR
WOUNDS?

BEFORE
THAT...

YOU DON'T
HAVE TO ANSWER
ME...BUT HAVE
MEGUMI-SAN
LOOK AT YOU.
SOON.

PLEASE?

KAORU-
DONO.

THANK
YOU...



HM?





...THAT
WOUND...



THAT
SWEAT...

LET'S FIGHT.



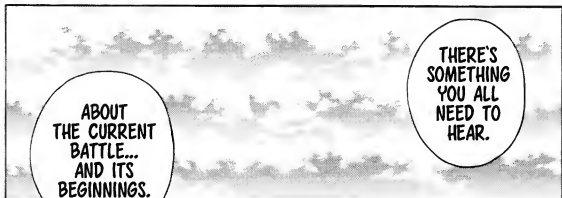
...AND
THIS
WARMTH...
...ARE
NOT
ILLUSIONS...

ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND LATER.



...THEY'RE
ALL REAL.

RIGHT NOW, THIS REALITY MUST BE PROTECTED...AND NOT THE ILLUSIONS.



ABOUT
THE CURRENT
BATTLE...
AND ITS
BEGINNINGS.

THERE'S
SOMETHING
YOU ALL
NEED TO
HEAR.



TEN
DAYS FROM
NOW, KAMIYA
DOJO WILL
BE UNDER
ATTACK.



THIS
MORNING
...

WHILE THIS
ONE WAS
RETURNING
HOME, A
DECLARATION
OF WAR WAS
MADE BY THE
MASTERMIND
OF THESE
INCIDENTS.



THE
MASTERMIND
IS YUKISHIRO
ENISHI.



THIS ONE'S
BROTHER.



...BROTHER
?

MORE
ACCURATELY—
BROTHER—
IN-LAW.



...THIS ONE'S
WIFE, WHO WAS
KILLED WITH
THESE VERY
HANDS.

THE
BROTHER
OF HIMURA
TOMOE...

THE STORY
OF THE PAIN
THAT CARVED
THIS CROSS-
SHAPED SCAR.

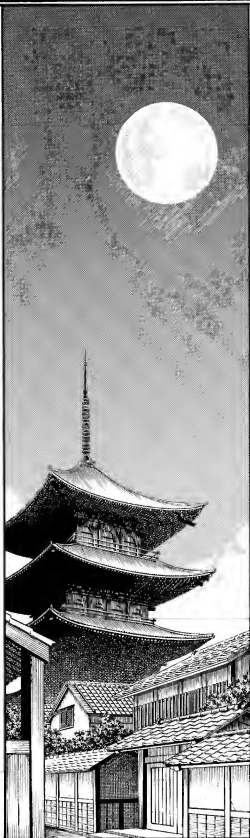
IT IS A
STORY
OF THE
BAKUMATSU...

Rurouni Kenshin



Act 165—Remembrance 1: Hitokiri

KYOTO.



THE
1ST
YEAR
OF
GENJI
(1864).

WE'D
BETTER
HURRY.

IT'S
VERY
LATE.



AH, THE
UNIDENTIFIED
"HITOKIRI
BATTŌSAI."

THERE'VE
BEEN
HITOKIRI
REPORTED
RECENTLY.
AMONG
THEM—

TRP

TRP



YES...

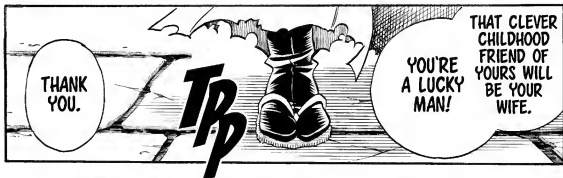
SO
YOU'RE
FINALLY
GETTING
MARRIED NEXT
MONTH, EH,
KIYOSATO?



WHETHER
HE EXISTS
OR NOT, THE
SHŌGUNATE
WILL HAVE TO
COME UP
WITH A
PLAN.

TSK! WE
HAD SOME NICE
SAKE TONIGHT!
LET'S NOT
TALK ABOUT
WORK!







I HAVE
NO PERSONAL
GRUDGE AGAINST
YOU... BUT
YOU MUST DIE
FOR THE NEW
ERA.

Act 165

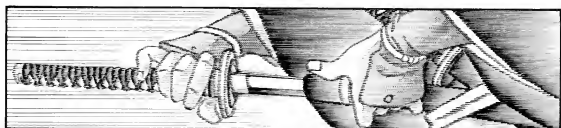
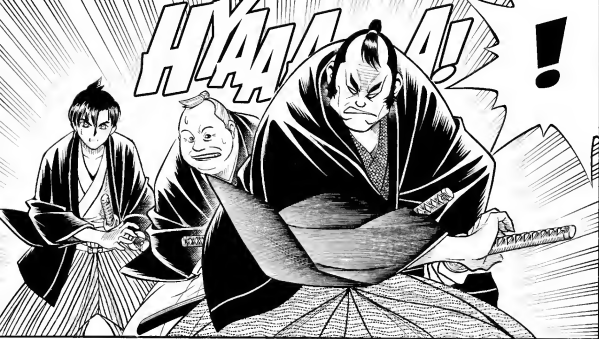
Remembrance I: Hitokiri

**CHŌSHŪ
ISHIN
SHISHI...**

**HIMURA
BATTŌSAI.**

....!

**WHO
ARE
YOU...?**



RYÜTSUSEN-
ZAN
(DRAGON-
HAMMER
STRIKE-
TRAGEDY)!!!

龍槌閃・慘!!!

飛天御剣流

HITEN
MITSURUGI-
RYÜ-



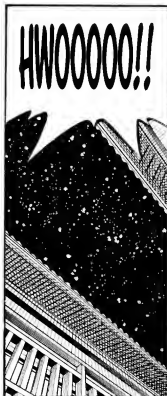


...GIVE
UP.



N...

NOOO
!!



I WILL
NOT
DIE!!

I CAN'T
DIE. I
DON'T
WANT TO
DIE.





FIFTEEN YEARS BETWEEN THE ARRIVAL OF PERRY'S
BLACK SHIPS AND THE MEIJI RESTORATION—



A TIME OF CLASHING AMBITIONS AND IDEALS AS JAPAN IS OPENED TO FOREIGN
IMPERIALISM AND THE EMPEROR AND THE SHŌGUN JOCKEY FOR POWER—



AS REVOLUTIONARY SWORDSMEN RISE AGAINST THOSE LOYAL TO
THE TOKUGAWA SHŌGUNATE AND SPLIT THE NATION IN TWO—





THIS IS THE BAKUMATSU!!







...DON'T...
WANT
TO
DIE...

I...

GUH...

NN...



I
THOUGHT...
I'D BE
ABLE...TO
LOVE YOU...

I'M...
GOING
TO BE...
MARRIED...



TOMOE...





WE HAVE
WITNESSED
YOUR
SKILLS...

TP



IT'S
NOTHING.

!
YOUR
CHEEK'S
BEEN—



...TO
INJURE THE
GREAT
HIMURA...

BUT...THIS
MAN MUST
HAVE BEEN
QUITE A
SWORDS-
MAN...



THANK
YOU FOR
FULFILLING
YOUR
DUTIES.

SH-



...WAS
TERRIBLE.

BUT HIS
DESPERATION
TO LIVE...



HIS
SKILL WAS
NOTHING.

NO.





NOTHING.

NO.

DID YOU
SAY
SOME-
THING?

HM?



BUT...

MM.

"DESPERA-
TION
TO LIVE,"
EH?
HE
MUST BE
A GREAT
FIGHTER, TO
SENSE THAT JUST
FROM CROSSING
SWORDS.



KNOWING
THAT...

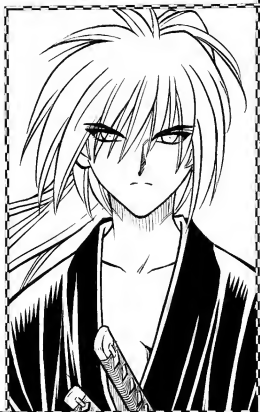
...WOULD
YOU BE ABLE
TO DO THIS
WITHOUT EVEN
CHANGING YOUR
EXPRESSION?



HE
TRULY
IS...

...A
HITO-
KIRI.

Rurouni Kenshin



Act 166
Remembrance
2: The
Birth of
Battōsai



TENCHŪ!!





TENCHŪ! TENCHŪ! TENCHŪ! TENCHŪ! TENCHŪ!

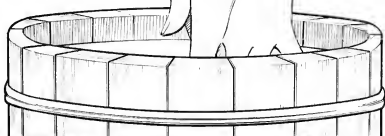


**TEN TEN TEN TEN TEN TEN TEN
TEN TEN TEN TEN TEN TEN TEN**



**CHŪ CHŪ CHŪ CHŪ CHŪ CHŪ CHŪ
CHŪ CHŪ CHŪ CHŪ CHŪ CHŪ CHŪ**

PLP



...SOAKS
EVERY-
THING...

THE
SMELL
OF
BLOOD...



KATSURA-
SENSEI
IS
WAITING
!

HURRY
UP!



HEY
BATTŌSAI!
YOU'RE
HERE!

TP



THE YOUNG LEADER
OF THE CHŌSHŪ ISHIN
SHISHI. LATER SIGNS
THE "SATSUMA-CHŌSHŪ"
TREATY THAT EFFECTED
THE TURNING OVER OF
THE SHŌGUNATE'S POWER.

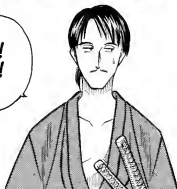
ONE OF THE
THREE KEY FIGURES
OF THE REVOLUTION.

IT'S BEEN
A WHILE
SINCE WE'VE
SEEN EACH
OTHER.

ARE YOU
DOING
WELL?

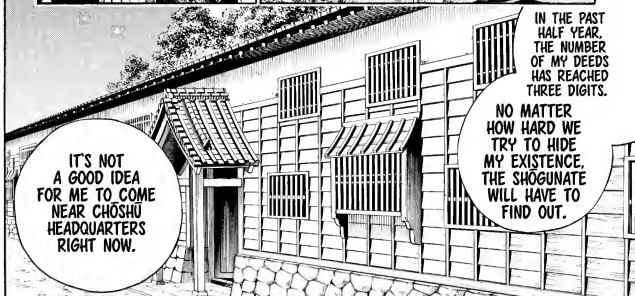


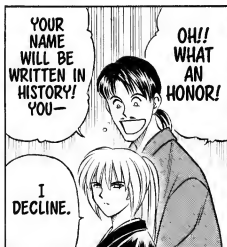
HEY!
HEY!



YES...I
HAVE BEEN
"DOING" THEM
WELL.







IT IS ENOUGH
FOR ME TO SEE
THE BIRTH OF
A NEW ERA IN
WHICH EVERYONE
CAN LIVE IN
PEACE.

AND I
HAVE NO
INTEREST IN
HONORS OR
HISTORY.

A HITOKIRI
IS BEST
LEFT
IN THE
SHADOWS.

B...
BUT...

THP



...

EVEN IF
YOU CHANGE
THE WORDING,
THE MEANING
IS THE SAME.

A
CARROT!
KATSURA-
SENSEI
WAS JUST—

HE'S
CHANGED...
I GUESS
ALL THAT
KILLING...

...IT
DIDN'T
WORK.

IT'S TOO
MUCH TO
UNDO
JUST BY
TOSSING
HIM A
CARROT.

BUT I
DO KNOW ONE
THING FROM
SEEING HIM
AGAIN.

IT'S JUST
AS I'ZUKA-
KUN SAYS.



HIS MANNER
MAY HAVE
CHANGED IN
THIS PAST
YEAR...BUT HIS
HEART IS IN
THE SAME
PLACE.



WHAT
IS THIS?
THAT'S
NICE.

I
HURRIED HERE
FROM KYOTO
BECAUSE YOU
WANTED TO SHOW
ME SOMETHING.
WHAT IS THIS,
SHINSAKU?

TAKASUGI SHINSAKU
SECOND IN
COMMAND OF THE
CHŌSHŪ ISHIN SHISHI.

**THE
KIHEITAI
!!**

AN ACTIVIST AND
A WARMONGER WHO
WILL EVENTUALLY
UNITE CHŌSHŪ
WITH OTHER PRO-
REVOLUTIONISTS.

THEY WILL
BE THE
REVOLUTION'S
NEW
STRENGTH!



CLASS AND
RANK HAVE
NO MEANING
HERE!!

ALL WE
ASK FOR IS
HEART AND
STRENGTH! IF
WE SHARE THOSE,
THEN WE ARE
ALL COMRADES!
THAT IS MY
KIHETAI!

TAKE
A LOOK.

EVEN A
YOUNG ONE
LIKE THAT?

TAP

THEY MAY
BE MORE
USEFUL THAN
THE SAMURAI
SOFTENED BY
300 YEARS
OF PEACE...

BUT
STILL...ARE
YOU SURE
IT WILL
WORK...?

YOU'RE
A
WORRIER,
AS
ALWAYS.



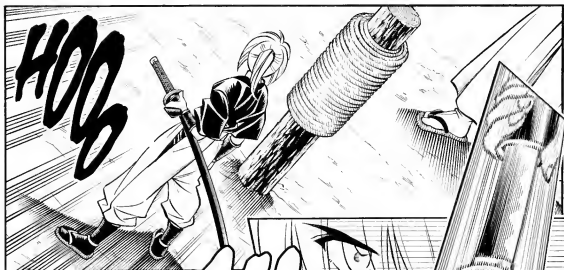
IF YOU
SPLIT IT IN
TWO, I'LL
GIVE YOU
ONE RYŌ!

HEH
HEH.



HAH!
A KID
CARRYING
A SWORD
LIKE A
MAN!

ALL RIGHT,
SHOW US
SOMETHING.
WHATEVER
YOU CAN
DO.



OH!!



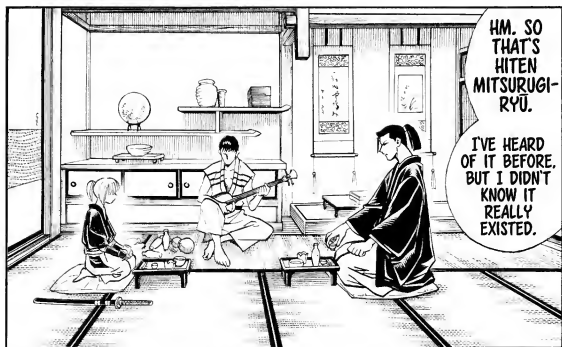


双龍閃
そうりゅうせん

SÖRYÜSEN
(TWIN
DRAGON
STRIKE)!

飛天御剣流
ひてんみっすりゅう

HITEN
MITSURUGI-
RYÜ —





CAN YOU?

THEN...



...



KUP



...THERE
TRULY IS
AN ERA OF
PEACE...
THEN...

IF WHEN
I FINALLY
LAY DOWN
MY
BLOOD-
STAINED
BLADE...

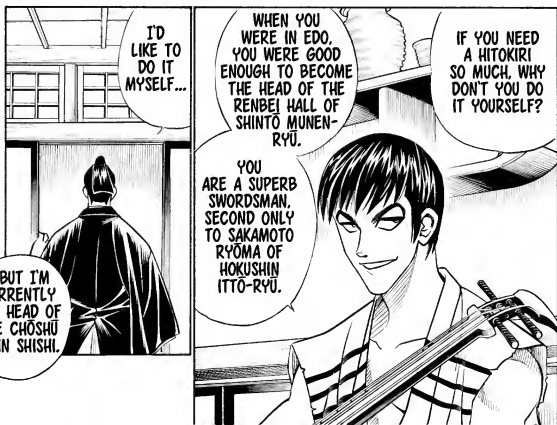


...I
UNDERSTAND.

WE
WILL HEAD FOR
KYOTO FIRST
THING TOMORROW
MORNING. GET
SOME REST
UPSTAIRS
TONIGHT.



...I'M SHINSAKU...
TAKING THE
YOUNG MAN
TO KYOTO.



I'D
LIKE TO
DO IT
MYSELF...

WHEN YOU
WERE IN EDO,
YOU WERE GOOD
ENOUGH TO BECOME
THE HEAD OF THE
RENBEI HALL OF
SHINTO MUNEN-
RYU.

IF YOU NEED
A HITOKIRI
SO MUCH, WHY
DON'T YOU DO
IT YOURSELF?

YOU
ARE A SUPERB
SWORDSMAN,
SECOND ONLY
TO SAKAMOTO
RYOMA OF
HOKUSHIN
ITTO-RYU.

...BUT I'M
CURRENTLY
THE HEAD OF
THE CHOSHU
ISHIN SHISHI.



THEN
YOU'D
BETTER
REMAIN
A CLEAN
SHRINE.

BUT IF
YOU ARE
GOING TO
RUIN A
YOUNG MAN'S
LIFE FOR
THAT
REASON...

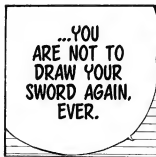
BING

NO ONE
WOULD
CARRY A
BLOODSTAINED
SHRINE ON
THEIR
SHOULDERS.



...THAT'S
RIGHT.

YOU'RE
THE
PORTABLE
SHRINE
AT THE
BAKUMATSU
"FESTIVAL."



...YOU
ARE NOT TO
DRAW YOUR
SWORD AGAIN,
EVER.

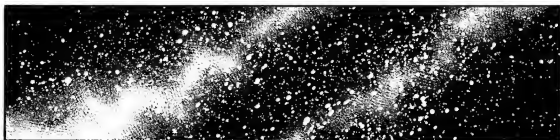


NO MATTER
HOW TIGHT A
SITUATION
YOU'RE
PUT IN...
...EVEN IF
IT MEANS YOU
BECOME AN
EMBARRASSMENT
TO YOUR
DESCENDANTS...



TODAY
MARKS THE
DEATH OF
KATSURA
KOGORŌ, THE
SWORDSMAN.

YOU
DON'T HAVE
TO TELL
ME.





...PLEASE.

CHILLED
SAKE...

WELCOME.

WHAT
WOULD
YOU
LIKE?

“FREE TALK”

Long time no see! This is Watsuki, who is dependent on his little space heater because the central heating is broken. I actually like curling up with the *kotatsu* the most, but it's a forbidden pleasure for a manga artist battling sleepiness, so I haven't brought it out since I started the series. Ahh... my sweet *kotatsu*....

Now for the usual. First, about action figures. By reading the previous TALK segment, some of you may have thought, “Ah, Watsuki has finally gone to a faraway land.” But no no no no no! Not so! I'm hanging on by one toe at the edge of the sumo ring! The figure shelf is, as usual, filled with many American superheroes and monsters. The one I especially like recently is Malehulia from *Spawn*. It has a talking gimmick installed in it, making him laugh like, “Fua fua fua fua fua fuaaaa!” I make him laugh during work, and get the cold eye from my assistants.

The usual #2: video games. I played *Gyaku no Kenshi* (The Last Blade). But, of course, I haven't been able to play very much, because of work. I'm temporarily naming the “power” Washizuka and “skill” Moriya as my main characters. As much as I've played, so far I can only say they're “interesting,” but Washizuka's *Saishū Rōga* (Finale: Wolf Fang) is so darn cool. All Shinsengumi fans should take a look. SNK's other main product, *Samurai Spirits*, I was able to play in test version once. It has a different feel to it than the 2D version, so it'll take a little bit to get used to, but this one looks fun too. The gaming world is hot right now, so I'm keeping a close eye on it. Work harder, anime world!! Work harder, manga world!! (Wait, that means I have to work harder, too...)

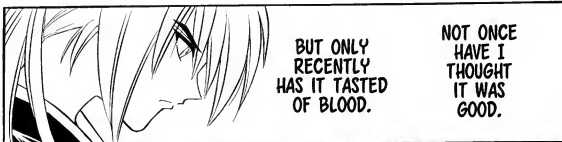
Recently, I've had opportunities to talk to other manga artists. Or maybe I should say I'm trying harder to make it so. Seeing a different path from my own teaches me a lot, and I've had many eye-opening moments. Experiences and hard-learned lessons from those who walk in front of me...and explosive creative energy and sharp new sensibilities from those who walk behind me. I was intimidated at first, but right now I feel like “I'm old but still in my prime.” (Is that a contradiction?) In the near future, I may come to a fork in my manga path, and I'll turn right, left, go straight, or rest up for another journey. I don't know what choice I'll make, but in order to continue to walk with my predecessors and successors, I'll always look forward and aim higher.

See you all in the next volume!



Act 167

Remembrance 3: In the Rain of Blood





Act 167
Remembrance 3:
In the Rain
of Blood



TP





YOU WILL
POUR US
OUR DRINKS!

HEY,
WOMAN
!!



AIZU IS
ON THE
BAKUFU'S
SIDE, FOOL.

EVERY DAY
WE LAY OUR
LIVES ON
THE LINE
FOR YOU
COMMONERS!

WE
ARE THE
IMPERIAL
WARRIORS
OF AIZU!



WHAT
DID YOU
SAY?!

YOU
SHOULD BE
GRATEFUL
TO SERVE
US!



IF YOU
VALUE YOUR
LIFE, HURRY
BACK TO YOUR
COUNTRY
HOME.

THERE'S
NO ROOM
FOR FALSE
REVOLUTION-
ARIES
IN KYOTO
ANYMORE.

THE
CHAOS
WILL ONLY
GROW
WORSE.

I'LL
WARN
YOU
ONCE.

GET OUT
OF KYOTO,
FAKES!!

BOO
BOO

UH...
NO...

BOO
BOO

THAT'S
RIGHT!

OH...

I'VE
CAUSED
A COMMO-
TION.

THANK
YOU.

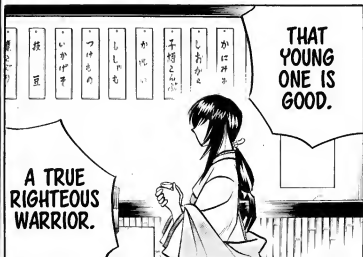
CHING

PUNK.

SIGN: PUB NAGURA

BAM

...



THAT
YOUNG
ONE IS
GOOD.

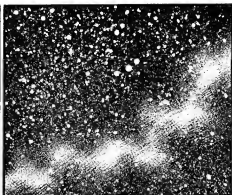
A TRUE
RIGHTEOUS
WARRIOR.

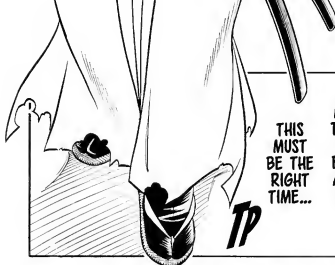
...



I'VE NEVER
BEEN ANGERED
BY SUCH
LITTLE MEN
BEFORE.

NOW THE
SAKE TASTES
LIKE FOULED
BLOOD.





THIS
MUST
BE THE
RIGHT
TIME...

BUT HITEN
MITSURUGI-RYŪ
TEACHES ME TO
SAVE PEOPLE
FROM THE PAIN
AND SUFFERING
OF THE ERA.

ILL...THAT
COULD VERY
WELL BE.



IF YOU
MUST GO...

...TRY TO
STOP ME
BACK
THEN...?

ER!!

YOU
NOT GO
YOUR
ABOUT
OUTSIDE
YOU MUST
TRAINING

ALREADY A
YEAR SINCE
WE'VE PARTED.
WHY DID THE
MASTER...

BUT
FIRST,
DEFEAT
ME.



AFTER
BEING
INSULTED
LIKE
THAT?!!
RRG!!

H-HEY...
ARE YOU
SURE YOU
WANT TO
DO THIS...?



ALL
RIGHT...
HE'S
COMING!

WE
PICKED
THE RIGHT
ROAD!

SO IT
DOES.

KYOTO RUNS
ON MURDER
THESE DAYS!

BUT...
THAT'S
MURDER!



HUH



AND
YOU'RE
IN THE
WAY.

DISAPPEAR.





THAT'S
WHY I'VE
BEEN
AWAITING
YOU HERE...

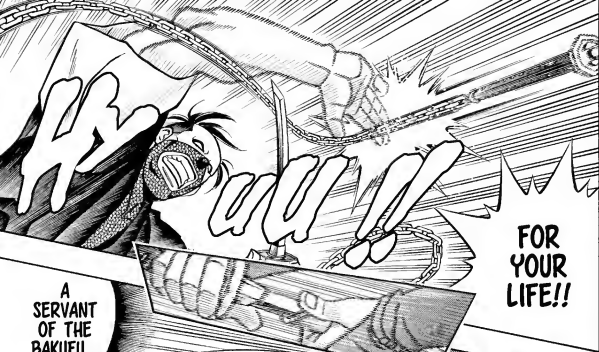
PLAY THE
FOOL IF
YOU WANT.
I'VE DONE
THE
RESEARCH.



WHAT
ARE YOU
TALKING
ABOUT?



YOU
MUST BE
HITOKIRI
BATTOSAI.



A
SERVANT
OF THE
BAKUFU...

FOR
YOUR
LIFE!!



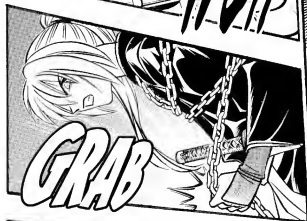
AND NO
ORDINARY
SAMURAI.

JUST LIKE
MYSELF—



PREPARE
!!

WASH



GRAB



SLASH

WASH



HE
IS AN
ASSASSIN
OF THE
SHADOWS,
TO BE
REVEALED
...

...NEVER
!!

G



SPY

PUP

PUP

PUP

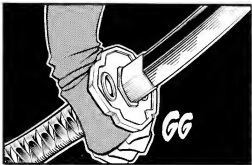


TRIP



◀ READ
THIS
WAY ▶

I CANNOT
LET THE
WORLD
KNOW OF
BATTŌSAI'S
EXISTENCE
YET!



THE
WOMAN
FROM
THE
PUB...



SHE
SAW
IT...

THEY
SAY IT
"RAINS BLOOD"
AT SCENES OF
BATTLE...



I CAME
AFTER YOU
TO THANK
YOU FOR
EARLIER.

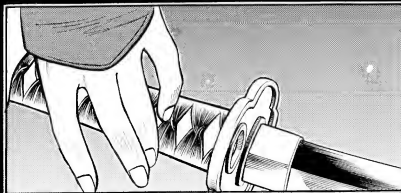




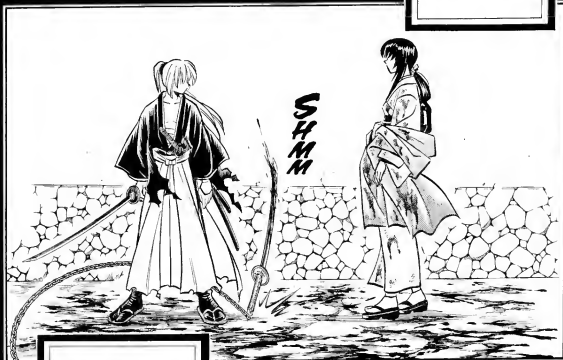
YOU
TRULY...

...MAKE
BLOOD
RAIN.

KENSIN
AND
TOMOE...



FROM THIS
MOMENT,
THE WHEELS
OF THEIR
FATES BEGIN
TO TURN...



QUIETLY...
RELENTLESSLY...
INSANELY.



GLOSSARY of the RESTORATION

A brief guide to select Japanese terms used in *Rurouni Kenshin*. Note that, both here and within the story itself, all names are Japanese style—i.e., last or “family” name first, with personal or “given” name following. This is both because *Kenshin* is a “period” story, as well as to decrease confusion—if we were to take the example of Kenshin’s sakabatō and “reverse” the format of the historically established assassin-name “Hitokiri Battōsai,” for example, it would make little sense to then call him “Battōsai Himura.”

Hiten Mitsurugi-ryū

Kenshin’s sword technique, used more for defense than offense. An “ancient style that pits one against many,” it requires exceptional speed and agility to master.

hitokiri

An assassin. Famous swordsmen of the period were sometimes thus known to adopt “professional” names—*Kawakami Gensai*, for example, was also known as “Hitokiri Gensai.”

Ishin Shishi

Loyalist or pro-Imperialist *patriots* who fought to restore the Emperor to his ancient seat of power

Kawakami Gensai

Real-life, historical inspiration for the character of *Himura Kenshin*

-kun

Honorific. Used in the modern day among male students, or those who grew up together, but another usage—the one you’re more likely to find in *Rurouni Kenshin*—is the “superior-to-inferior” form, intended as a way to emphasize a difference in status or rank, as well as to indicate familiarity or affection.

Bakumatsu

Final, chaotic days of the Tokugawa regime

Boshin War

Civil war of 1868-69 between the new government and the *Tokugawa Bakufu*. The anti-*Bakufu*, pro-Imperial side (the Imperial Army) won, easily defeating the Tokugawa supporters.

-chan

Honorific. Can be used either as a diminutive (e.g., with a small child—“Little Hanako or Kentarō”), or with those who are grown, to indicate affection (“My dear..”).

-dono

Honorific. Even more respectful than *-san*; the effect in modern-day Japanese conversation would be along the lines of “Milord So-and-So.” As used by Kenshin, it indicates both respect and humility.

Edo

Capital city of the *Tokugawa Bakufu*; renamed *Tokyo* (“Eastern Capital”) after the Meiji Restoration

Himura Kenshin

Kenshin’s “real” name, revealed to Kaoru only at her urging

-san

Honorific. Carries the meaning of "Mr.," "Ms.," "Miss," etc., but used more extensively in Japanese than its English equivalent (note that even an enemy may be addressed as "-san").

shôgun

Feudal military ruler of Japan

shôgunate

See **Tokugawa Bakufu**

Toba Fushimi, Battle at

Battle near **Kyoto** between the forces of the new, imperial government and the fallen **shôgunate**. Ending with an imperial victory, it was the first battle of the **Boshin War**.

Tokugawa Bakufu

Military feudal government which dominated Japan from 1603 to 1867

Tokyo

The renaming of "**Edo**" to "**Tokyo**" is a marker of the start of the **Meiji Restoration**

Kyoto

Home of the Emperor and imperial court from A.D. 794 until shortly after the **Meiji Restoration** in 1868

loyalists

Those who supported the return of the Emperor to power; **Ishin Shishi**

Meiji Restoration

1853-1868; culminated in the collapse of the **Tokugawa Bakufu** and the restoration of imperial rule. So called after Emperor Meiji, whose chosen name was written with the characters for "culture and enlightenment."

om

An ancient meditative symbol found in both Buddhism and Hinduism, it is believed to be the sound that was spoken when the universe was created

patriots

Another term for **Ishin Shishi**...and, when used by Sano, not a flattering one

rurouni

Wanderer, vagabond

sakabatô

Reversed-edge sword (the dull edge on the side the sharp should be, and vice versa); carried by Kenshin as a symbol of his resolution never to kill again

-sama

Honorific. The respectful equivalent of **-san**, **-sama** is used primarily in addressing persons of much higher rank than one's self...or, in a romantic sense, in addressing those upon whom one is crushing, wicked hard.

IN THE NEXT VOLUME...

Nestled away in the Japanese countryside, far from the gore-spattered streets of the capital, a man who never knew what happiness was begins a new life as husband to a woman who claims to have nowhere else to go. But this idyllic splendor is fated to be short-lived, as the machinations of politics, and an assassin's ambitions, threaten this peaceful interlude. Can one woman alone be enough to hold back the madness?



Available in November 2005

